(c) the quantum of LPG imported during the year 2003-04 and the steps taken by Government to bridge the gap between supply and demand thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (c) Domestic production of LPG is less than domestic consumption. As a result, a part of domestic consumption is met through imports. During 2003-04, 1.708 Million Metric Tonnes of LPG was imported. The setting up of refineries is decontrolled and any capacities, which may *inter alia* produce additional LPG, would come up on commercial considerations.

Merger of mega oil companies

542. SHRI TARIQ ANWAR: Will the Minister of PETROLUEM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is a proposal to create two mega players in the oil sector by merging State-owned oil companies;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the names and the equity shares of the two companies?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) No formal proposal to create two mega players in the oil sector by merging State-owned oil companies has been formulated.

(b) and (c) Do not arise, in view of (a) above.

Merger of IBP with IOC

543. SHRI SANJAY NIRUPAM: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have approved the merger of petro-retailer IBP Co. with Indian Oil Corporation (IOC); and

(b) if so, the details regarding the above and whether it would result in the falling of Government shareholding?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) The Government have conveyed their approval, in principle, to the Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOC) with